Press release | 09.09.2015

# Refugee crisis

## National egotism on refugee crisis must be overcome

The European Parliament today debated the refugee crisis, ahead of a meeting of EU home affairs ministers on 14 September and proposals from the EU Commission on a redistribution scheme for refugees. Commenting on the refugee crisis in the context of the State of the Union debate, Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts** said:

*"The EU was founded on the respect of human dignity and rights but the refugee crisis has once again underlined that these common values are under threat from the national egotism of member state governments. The multitude of citizens' actions in accommodating refugees across Europe underlines that the European spirit is alive and well. EU governments need to finally follow the public's lead.*

*"The blockage to agreeing a fair distribution of asylum seekers across all EU member states must be overcome. We also need a more fundamental shift in thinking. The current crisis is a direct result of the short-sighted and irresponsible refusal by member states to coordinate on immigration and asylum policy. This has to end. We also need legal migration routes to Europe to end the deadly business of refugee smugglers."*

The European Commission today proposed a revised and updated scheme for redistributing asylum seekers in Europe. At the same time, the European Parliament voted its opinion on the original draft EU scheme for redistributing 40,000 refugees (1). Commenting on the different proposals, Green asylum and migration spokesperson **Ska Keller**, who is the European Parliament's rapporteur/draftsperson on the redistribution scheme, said:

*"The European Parliament has today underlined that the only way Europe can properly respond to the refugee crisis is by acting together. A large majority of MEPs has voted in favour of a binding scheme for redistributing refugees who are stranded in Italy and Greece. EU home affairs ministers must follow this lead on Monday and finally endorse a binding scheme, instead of continuing to pass the buck. They need to take common responsibility for the refugees who have escaped war and persecution and are looking for protection in Europe.*

*"It is welcome that the EU Commission has today proposed a more ambitious scheme, setting out a binding key for the redistribution of 120,000 additional refugees (1). In increasing the scale of the scheme, as well as ensuring it applies to refugees in Hungary, as well as Italy and Greece, the Commission has responded somewhat to the changed reality and the deeper humanitarian crisis. This cannot be a one-off emergency response: Europe needs a permanent mechanism for ensuring a fair distribution of refugees in emergency*

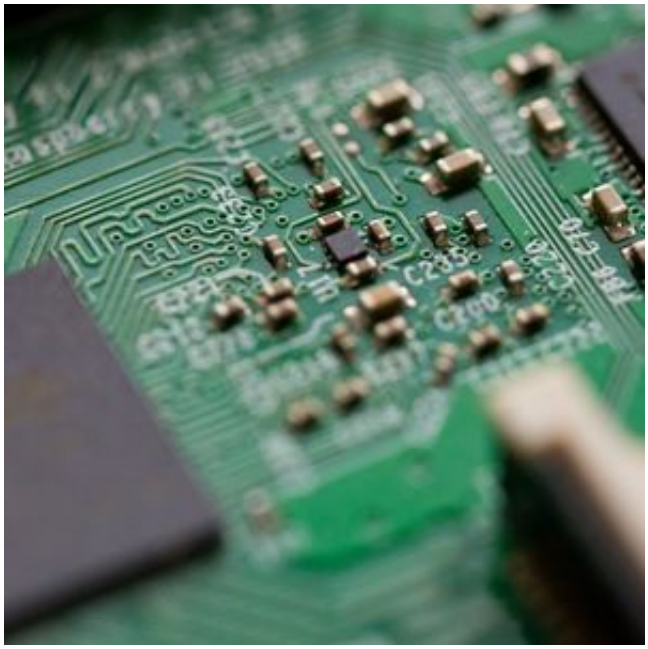
*situations. This must take the needs of refugees - like language competence and family connections - into account and we are glad the Commission has taken up this Green suggestion in its proposal. However, it is also necessary to finally overhaul the totally failed Dublin system of asylum rules in Europe."*

(1) The European Parliament adopted the Keller report, which sets out the EP's position on the original scheme proposed by the EU Commission for the redistribution of 40,000 refugees from Italy and Greece. The European Commission today proposed updating this scheme to provide for the relocation of 120,000 additional refugees, including from Hungary. This would bring the total number covered under the redistribution scheme to 160,000.

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